
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1235 4th Street NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Square Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	6C	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	December 15, 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#12-038	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner, Sergei Mikhailov, seeks concept approval for a new three-story, three-bay wide brick veneer rowhouse in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. Concept design plans were prepared by NDI Design.

Property Description and Context

This block of 4th Street features an eclectic variety of wood frame and brick rowhouses from 1850 through 1900 (See Figure 1). Heights and styles vary accordingly. The tallest historic building on the block is a three-story flat front brick rowhouse with wood cornice at 1215 4th Street. Several recent new construction projects on this block have matched or modestly exceeded this height. As a whole, the block displays a variety of rowhouse sizes, styles and forms, with no single type predominating. Across the street from the site a contributing rowhouse has been bracketed by a row of new 3 story brick rowhouses of traditional form.

Proposal

The three story brick rowhouse will be 18 feet wide and align with the north property such that an 8 foot landscaped side yard would be left between the new rowhouse and the existing row to the south. The first story will feature a frame, hexagonal projection with flat roof. Above a simple cornice of brackets and dentils a full-height third story with mansard roof front will cap the rowhouse. Two dormers will augment the metal mansard roof. The north party wall will be unpunched masonry while the south elevation will have a random arrangement of windows their locations derived from the interior room arrangement. A previously considered curb-cut and driveway has been eliminated from the proposal until the applicant is successful applying for such with the District Department of Transportation. If successful, the matter will be brought to the Board for further consideration.

Evaluation

The proposed design is largely compatible with the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. Its mansard roof and one-story front bay are forms found throughout this historic district and are a straight forward arrangement well-suited for this location. The windowless north masonry party wall is on the property line for a vacant lot that can be expected to be developed at some future date, so should not be a permanent concern. Although this arrangement might be only temporary the only appropriate material to match a brick front rowhouse is a brick party wall. There is no historic precedent for a more temporary material like siding or stucco. The same material criteria are true for the south wall and should be followed there as well.

Small details of traditional proportion and detailing can be slightly adjusted to better adhere to the traditional patterns with which this building is trying to work. These details include a more robust cornice with an actual depth and projection from the front façade, rather than the shallow device shown. The dormers also need adjustment so they are trimmed, sized slightly smaller, and located between bays rather than aligned with bays. These are small items that Staff can finalize with the applicant.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board give concept approval to the concept design for a three story brick rowhouse with mansarded third story at 1235 4th Street NW as consistent with the preservation Act and delegate final approval to staff.



Figure 1. Vacant site looking east (above). Figure 2. East side of 1200 block of 4th Street (below)